

nel which later gave access to the Park Utah Mine—the largest mine in Wasatch County.<sup>13</sup>

The Park Utah mine was to come into being in 1916 when George W. Lambourne and George D. Blood would combine forces to develop holdings east of the Ontario mine. Permission was to be secured to work through the Ontario drain tunnel, and the venture would develop so successfully that by 1922 the Park Utah mine would be producing 6,000 tons of lead, silver, and zinc ore per month, worth fifty dollars a ton.<sup>14</sup>

Later development would see the consolidation of the Park Utah, Daly Judge, and Ontario mining companies into the Park Utah Consolidated Mines Company in 1925.<sup>15</sup> These mines would, in the course of time, greatly enrich Wasatch County and its inhabitants, who would work in the mines and furnish it with supplies.

The mining fever accompanying the rich strikes in the Park City area was also felt on the other side of the mountain range, especially in the Snake Creek area of the Provo Valley. Here many claims were staked out by the Mormon pioneer settlers who originally came to the valley for farming and stock raising. These settlers formed the Snake Creek mining district in May of 1870.<sup>16</sup>

To the Snake Creek district came a motley group of mining enthusiasts, and the nearby town of Midway experienced a mining boom at the turn of the century. Many claims were staked out up and down Snake Creek Canyon, and men discussed the relative merits of such holdings as the Steamboat property, Lions, Wide West,

<sup>13</sup>Emett K. Olson, "Mining Methods of Park Utah Consolidated Mines Company" (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1950), p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup>Olsen, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup>By Laws of the Snake Creek Mining District, (Heber 1930), p. 1.

Heber City, Big Four, Balsam Grove, Bogan Property, Lone Pine, Southern Tier, St. Louis Vassar, Wolverine, Success, the Tattersal Property, and Boulder Basin.<sup>17</sup>

Some rich ore was found, and in the case of the Southern Tier, \$80,000 worth was reportedly shipped to Park City.<sup>18</sup> In general, however, the ore deposits proved pockety and spotty; and this, coupled with the water problem so prevalent in the region round about, brought a disappointing end to the hopes of those who staked out the area.

Despite the disappointment of the many mining interests, the boom was of real significance to Midway. It meant a period of prosperity comparable to that prompted earlier by the stage coach contract and the building of the railroad through Utah. Many a family income was augmented by the work in the mines. It was also a period of romance and adventure. The usual topics of daily discussion gave way to mining speculations, the fortunes to be made and spent, the diggings at Bonanza Flat, and the new arrivals at the Aggie O'Neil Hotel. Some of the wealthy speculators from the East even brought their libraries with them and bestowed them on a culture hungry people when they left.<sup>19</sup>

Mining activity benefited Wasatch County in many ways. It furnished much needed work, both in the mines and related activities such as lumbering and farming, and it furnished considerable revenue for many county projects and responsibilities.

#### LUMBERING

When William Gardner made his report to Brigham Young of the exploration of the Provo and Weber river valleys he told of the plentiful supply of timber there.

<sup>17</sup>*Wasatch Wave*, December 21, 1906.

<sup>18</sup>Emily Coleman, interview, 1952.

<sup>19</sup>Lethe Tatge, interview, 1952.



Indeed, one of Brigham Young's chief purposes in building the Provo Canyon road was to make this timber readily available.<sup>20</sup> In this region were millions of board feet of marketable saw timber. In addition to the main stands of Douglas fir and Engelman spruce there were vast stands of aspen and scattered stands of white and alpine fir, all of which were heavily logged as the region was opened.

Saw mills began to spring forth all over the valley as soon as the settlers arrived. In the winter of 1859-60 William Meeks and James Adams with companions went up Center Creek Canyon and got out timber for a saw mill. This was the pioneer saw mill in the Provo Valley, and it began turning out lumber in the fall of 1860.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup>*Journal History*, June 6, 1858, p. 2.

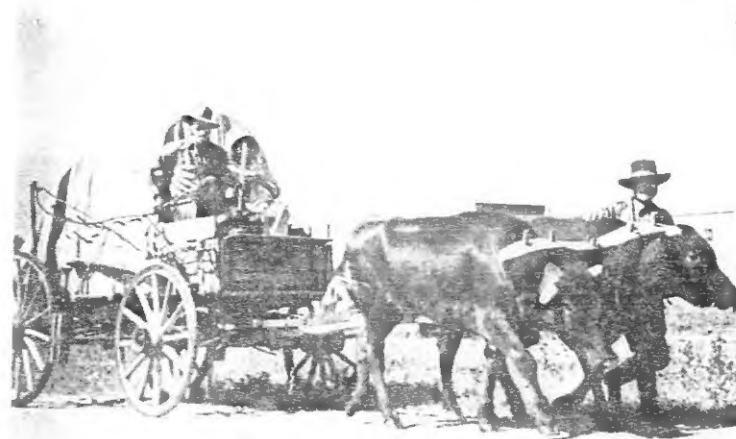
<sup>21</sup>Crook, "History of Wasatch County," *op. cit.*, p. 7.



Thacker's early sawmill: Charles Thacker standing center and John M. Thacker right rear.

Next was Peter Shirts with a mill on Snake Creek, followed by the Lake Creek Mills of Nicol and Alexander, the Carroll mill in Heber, and the Watkins mill on Deer Creek. Other mills were built by Forman on Daniel Creek, Henry Coleman on the lower Snake Creek, and McGuire, Turner and Campbell mills on the South Fork of Provo River.

The mills were first run with water power from the creeks but later steam was introduced. Logging was done with oxen, and it would be difficult to overestimate the importance of these animals in the pioneering venture. They were particularly valuable in lumbering. Here they were preferred even over horses. They were steady and not easily excited. Where horses, when pulling a heavy load would saw back and forth or would balk, the oxen would steady down and pull harder and harder. Oxen could get over the logs easier and could go



Freighting by oxen

through loose mud and snow where horses would bog down. Oxen were not as expensive as horses since they did not require grain for feed.

Dave Thacker reports an experience of Homer

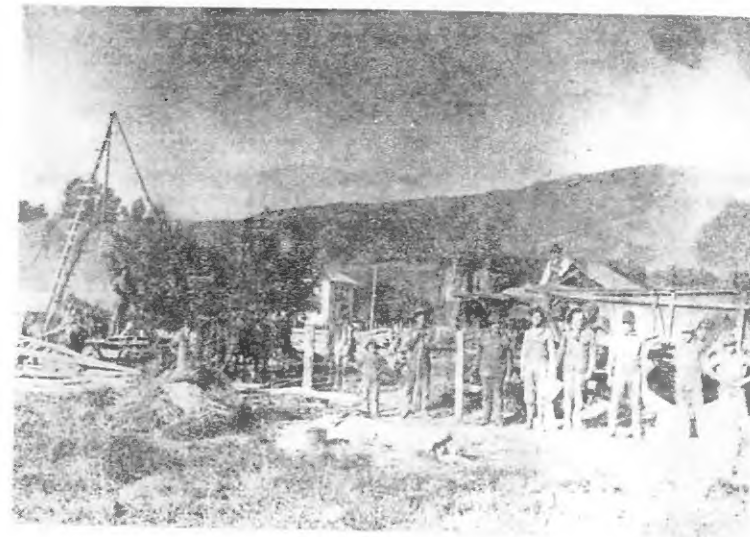


Early plastering crew: Alfred Duke, Robert McKnight, Teenie Duke, Joe Duke, John Duke, Jr. Teenie Duke was paper hanging,

Fraughton's which illustrates how well oxen could be handled. Fraughton was logging for one of the mills in the hollow. He was digging around a log to work a chain under it when the log rolled on his leg. He knew his leg would be severely injured if the log were not rolled off the same way. By working until he had a roll hitch on the log he was able, even in his lying position, to direct the oxen verbally in removing the log without injury to his leg.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Julia Anderson, "Lumbering in Wasatch County," MSS, (Daughters of Utah Pioneers Historical Collection, Heber, 1952), p. 13.

Life was hard at the lumber camps both for owner and laborers. The mill owner's family usually lived right at the mill and his wife or older daughters did the cooking for the crews.



Threshing crew in Midway

Sawed lumber was used as building material in the valley or shipped to some of the central Utah settlements. When mining activity in the Park City region began much of the lumber was shipped there for use in the mines. William Gardner, the early Mormon explorer of the valley, thought that timbers could be floated down the Provo River to the market in Provo City, but this did not prove practical.

Two special lumbering activities in the county were the manufacture of shingles from Engelmann spruce and excelsior packing from quaking aspen.

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Shingle mills were operated by Charles Thacker, John Campbell, Mr. Henry S. Alexander, and Herbert Clegg. Shingle timber had to be clear from knots, and straight grained. After the logs had been cleared they were hauled to the mill and there sawed by a dragsaw into sixteen-inch blocks. Once the blocks were prepared they were quartered with an ax and the heart wood taken out and placed in a steam box overnight to soften and draw out the sap so that the shingles would not split in use.

After softening to the consistency of cheese, the shingles were cut with a knife on a frame run by steam power. A man stood at a bench feeding the hot blocks to the knife, twisting the blocks back and forth and turning them over to keep the shingles even while forming the thick and thin ends. Then girls, who sat or kneeled on sacks filled with sawdust, placed the shingles in bunches of 250 each. A good buncher could bunch about 10,000 shingles a day at ten cents per thousand. For this dollar a day she worked from dawn until late at night, often by the light of a bonfire.<sup>23</sup> These shingles lasted 50 years.

Lumbering is still an important industry in the county. The major change from pioneer days has been the establishment of national forests resulting in the regulation of timber cutting.